



NEWS RELEASE



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**DEPARTMENT REQUESTS RECEIVER TO MANAGE AND CLOSE
EMERALD PARK HEALTH CARE CENTER**

Emergency motion filed in circuit court, decision pending

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – At the request of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan has filed an emergency motion in Cook County circuit court to appoint a receiver to administer the day-to-day operations of Emerald Park Health Care Center in Evergreen Park and to begin steps to close the 249-bed skilled and intermediate care facility.

Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, state public health director, and Madigan are seeking the receivership due to concerns about the health and safety of the residents at 9125 S. Pulaski Road in Evergreen Park.

“Emerald Park has demonstrated that it is incapable of providing adequate supervision and proper care of its residents,” Dr. Whitaker said. “While the Department has already begun proceedings to revoke the facility’s license, we feel we can no longer wait until the July hearing to take action.”

“We are taking this drastic action to protect the residents of Evergreen Park and residents of the Emerald Park Health Care Center,” Madigan said. “While recent events have highlighted gross mismanagement at this facility, it has a long history of

problematic incidents. The bottom line is that the state must no longer allow the current management to keep putting the community and residents at risk.”

The Department began proceedings to revoke Emerald Park’s operating license in June 2004 and also fined the facility \$10,000 for substantial failure to comply with the Nursing Home Care Act. A hearing on the matter is scheduled to begin July 18.

The Department assigned a monitor in February 2004 to regularly visit the facility to check on the welfare of the residents. Last week, during a Department investigation, monitoring of the facility was increased to around the clock. At the conclusion of the investigation on April 22, the Department determined that multiple immediate jeopardy deficiencies existed at the facility. These included the failure of the facility to adequately assess the behavior and criminal backgrounds of residents to assure they can provide the appropriate supervision; failure to provide required supervision to protect other residents and the community; and the continued failure of the facility’s administration to operate the facility so as to protect the health and safety of residents.

The Department initiated this investigation based on the outcome of a sweep by the Illinois State Police (ISP), reports from the monitor assigned at the facility, concerns of local legislators and multiple complaints. The ISP’s sweep resulted in the arrest of four residents with outstanding warrants.

In addition, multiple fires were intentionally set at the facility during the weekend of April 16 to 17. There were no injuries, but staff’s response was inadequate and it was a further indication of the facility’s failure to supervise residents.

The \$10,000 fine in June 2004 was the result of a complaint investigation in which Department surveyors learned the facility failed to provide adequate personal care and supervision to a resident who engaged in sexual activity with multiple partners in exchange for favors and cigarettes. The resident had a sexually transmitted disease

(STD) and her sexual partners were not counseled about the possibility of acquiring an STD. The facility also failed to monitor the resident for possible pregnancy and, once pregnant, did not identify the condition or provide prenatal care. The resident was 32-weeks pregnant by the time her pregnancy was discovered. These findings resulted in the Department's decision to revoke Emerald Park's license.

Other serious violations against Emerald Park include:

- A \$20,000 fine for not providing nursing services in accordance with residents' needs following an October 2003 survey. The facility failed to properly monitor the health of a resident who passed out after becoming intoxicated, to report resident abuse, to prevent a resident from leaving the facility unnoticed and to provide special rehabilitative programs to mentally ill residents.
- A \$5,000 fine for not protecting a resident from physical and mental abuse following a July 2002 survey. A resident was interrogated by a facility security guard who refused to let the resident leave the room, pushed the resident and put him in a police hold. The resident told surveyors that he had been interrogated and harassed by this security guard on other occasions and he had reported these to management.

State Sen. Ed Maloney, D-Chicago, and state Rep. James D. Brosnahan, D-Oak Lawn, who represent Evergreen Park, were pleased with today's action.

"I applaud the action of Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Attorney General," said Rep. Brosnahan. "Emerald Park has repeatedly failed to provide adequate care and supervision for its residents. This facility has also shown no regard for the safety and well being of community residents, especially young children."

"I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Whitaker and Attorney General Madigan's office in bringing this matter to a point where the residents of the facility and the surrounding community can feel safe once again. This action is more than justified in my mind and I am confident this outcome was one that Representative Brosnahan, Mayor Sexton and myself were working toward," said Sen. Maloney.

Evergreen Park Village Mayor Jim Sexton also supports the steps taken Wednesday.

“This is great news for the residents of Evergreen Park,” he said. “We want safe neighborhoods for our families, closing this facility accomplishes that.”